1st February 1929]

Emigration

Fixing of the sex-ratio among Indian emigrants to Malaya and Ceylon.

* 1274 *Q.*—Mr. C. Gopala Menon: Will the hon. the Home Member be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the Government of Malaya asked for and obtained the postponement of the application of the rule prescribing a fixed sex-ratio among Indian emigrants from South India to Malaya and Ceylon till 1st April 1928;

(*b*) whether further extension of time has been granted since then by the Government of India;

(*c*) whether the Government of Madras were consulted before action was taken by the Government of India; and

(*d*) whether he will be pleased to place on the table of the House the correspondence between the local Government and the Government of India on the subject?

A.—As the hon. Member is aware 'Emigration' is a central subject. Temporary exemption from the operation of the rule referred to has been granted by the Government of India from time to time. No further information can be given nor can the correspondence be placed on the table of the House.

Mr. C. Gopala Menon:—"May I know whether the Madras Government were consulted by the Government of India for the extension of time regarding the sex-ratio when it was granted?"

The hon. Khan Bahadur Sir Muhammad Usman Sahib Bahadur:—"Yes, Sir."

Mr. K. V. R. Swami:—"What is the advice given by this Government?"

The hon. Khan Bahadur Sir Muhammad Usman Sahib Bahadur:—"That is confidential, and therefore we cannot give any further information."

Mr. S. Satyamurti:—"May I know why, Sir?"

The hon. Khan Bahadur Sir Muhammad Usman Sahib Bahadur:—"Because under the rules as they stand at present, the Local Government, who act as the agents of the Government of India as far as this subject is concerned, are not at liberty to give the information that is asked for."

Mr. S. Satyamurti:—"May I know what those rules are?"

The hon. Khan Bahadur Sir Muhammad Usman Sahib Bahadur:—"They are confidential."

Mr. S. Satyamurti:—"On a point of order, Mr. President. I am obliged to you for having drawn my attention to a similar other matter on a previous day, but on this occasion may I know how the hon. the Home Member can refuse to answer this question? Unless it is a controversial matter, I suppose I am entitled to an answer under the rules. Even if there is some controversy between this Government and the Government of India

on a certain matter, I think I am entitled to an answer from the Government on matters of fact. I am asking whether the Home Member declines to answer this question because it is controversial; otherwise I am entitled for an answer."

The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"Probably 'confidential matters' are really matters on which the Government think they should not give information on public grounds. That is all I can suggest."

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI:—"That is why I ask whether the Government gives that answer?"

The hon. Khan Bahadur Sir MUHAMMAD USMAN SAHIB Bahadur:—"Yes, Sir."

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI:—"May I know what are the public interests which will be disserved by telling this House as to why this Government are sending more men than women to the Andamans without reference to the sex-ratio?"

The hon. Khan Bahadur Sir MUHAMMAD USMAN SAHIB Bahadur:—"It would amount to disclosing the nature of the correspondence with the Government of India regarding Malaya."

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI:—"May I know if this Government is so callous as not to disclose this matter?"

Deaths by suicide in the Federated Malay States.

*1275 Q.—Mr. C. GOPALA MENON: Will the hon. the Home Member be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether he is aware that the return of deaths by suicide of South Indians in the Federated Malay States shows a gradual increase in percentage of such deaths since 1921; and

(*b*) whether the Government of Madras have ascertained from the Government of the Federated Malay States the causes of death in each case and if so, what they are?

A.—As the hon. Member is aware 'Emigration' is a central subject. The Federated Malay States' report on the working of the Labour Department for the year 1927 shows that there has been an increase in the number of deaths from suicide during 1926 and 1927. The report has been placed on the Editors' table in G.O No. 1898 L., dated 4th August 1928. Forty-six cases of suicide were reported for the year 1927 as follows:—

Twenty-three cases—Reasons unknown.
Eighteen cases—Sickness.
Five cases—Domestic and financial troubles.

Mr. C. GOPALA MENON:—"In the answer given to this question it is stated 'there has been an increase in the number of deaths from suicide'. Is the Government aware that the increase is merely due to the increase in the sex ratio?"

The hon. Khan Bahadur Sir MUHAMMAD USMAN SAHIB Bahadur:—"No, Sir."

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI:—"May I know how the hon. the Home Member gives that laconic answer?"